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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAKU 001753

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON AZERBAIJAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT

REF: A. BAKU 001622

[1](#)B. BAKU 001712

[1](#)C. BAKU 1270

Classified By: Ambassador Anne Derse for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request, see para 11.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Azerbaijan is continuing to move forward in its efforts to finalize its National Security Concept (NSC). Retired UK General Sir Garry Johnson, who as part of the foreign experts advisory group has been advising the GOAJ on the NSC, pointed to the draft's clear language on Baku's goal of integration with the West, saying the document will serve as an "anchor point" for encouraging the GOAJ to embrace reforms. The GOAJ interagency process that produced the draft NSC was a positive precedent for a government with little skill in interagency coordination. Johnson judged that the draft Military Doctrine "is not a good piece of paper," and "it will be a difficult process" to make it better. He assessed that the US could play the key role in engaging with the MOD to bring about substantive reforms, especially in pushing for enhanced civilian control. Sir Garry and the UK Ambassador said, in sum, the GOAJ draft is better than expected, as good as it can be at this stage, and NATO needs to endorse it and move on to serious work with Azerbaijan on the related, and more substantive documents. In order to advance our goal of progress in Azerbaijan, IPAP implementation, we need to fully support and endorse this document when it becomes public. While the vast majority of the NSC is straightforward and acceptable, we note the document's allegations of Armenian "genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity." We request that the Department provide a careful, expert-level review of the draft NSC by December 5, so we can raise any concerns--particularly on NK issues--before the document is presented in mid-December to President Aliyev. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador attended a November 27 meeting of the GOAJ's interagency working group on the National Security Concept (NSC), chaired by Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov. At the meeting, the GOAJ's long-awaited draft NSC was circulated for final review. In two weeks, it will be sent to President Aliyev for approval and then on to Parliament for approval. (Full text of draft NSC emailed to desk November 24.) The UK, German, and Turkish Ambassadors, along with the International Advisors Working Group (IAWG) also attended the meeting. (NOTE: The IAWG was created to advise the GOAJ on drafting the NSC and is comprised of

security experts from Germany, Turkey and the UK, and a chair for the US, which has been vacant. See ref A.) The working group meeting provided a fascinating insight into the GOAJ,s fledgling interagency process. DFM Azimov forcefully argued that the GOAJ needed a formal, well-staffed interagency process, such as the United States, National Security Council, in order to continue the strategic planning process begun by the drafting of the National Security Concept, and more rationally implement GOAJ policy decisions. A representative from the Presidential Apparat responded simply "send me a letter." (For a long time, Azimov has been trying to create an interagency process but has been stymied both by bureaucratic inertia and the personal politics that dominate Azerbaijan,s decision-making process.)

14. (C) The Ambassador--accompanied by the DATT--had a follow-up meeting November 28 with British Ambassador Bristow and retired UK General Sir Garry Johnson, the British IAWG representative, to discuss the draft NSC. Bristow and Johnson agreed the draft was a good document and better than expected. The document contains clear language on Baku's goal of integration with the West and commitments to democratic development, which will serve as "an anchor point" for pushing the government on reform, they said. Bristow opined that the draft combined values and strategy to focus Azerbaijan's foreign policy in a Western orientation. Bristow and Johnson acknowledged that the draft "was not perfect" because it lacked precision and failed to prioritize national security threats. Still, the text "is better than expected, and as good as we're going to get," according to Johnson, who has been working with the GOAJ for three years to prepare the NSC.

15. (C) Johnson judged that the purpose of Azimov's November

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27 IAWG meeting was to ensure that key Western governments agree with the document. Baku, however, is probably not open to large scale changes in the draft because the document is nearly complete. Johnson noted Azimov's plan to send the draft to President Aliyev's office by the end of the year, and said it is likely the NSC will be approved quickly. The Parliament probably will take up the draft in February 2007. After Parliament approves the draft, it will be sent to NATO. Bristow said that the draft is good and probably would not raise any major concerns among NATO members. The key potential problem could be the draft's language on Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh (NK). Bristow and Johnson thought that the language on Armenia and the NK conflict was careful enough, however, not to cause a storm within NATO, and underscored it was a "lot worse" in earlier drafts. Johnson said the NK language had been pared back and was probably the minimum the GOAJ would get away with in terms of its domestic audience.

16. (Comment: In general, we agree. The vast majority of NSC language regarding the NK conflict is straightforward. The NSC also contains very good language about Azerbaijan,s commitment to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, and a clear statement of Azerbaijan,s desired principles for the peaceful settlement--Armenian withdrawal, re-establishment of Azerbaijani sovereignty, return of IDPs, defining legal status for the two communities of NK, and establishing conditions for the region,s overall development and integration. However, the NSC also contains relatively strong allegations of Armenian "war crimes," including "genocide." The NSC spells out Azerbaijan,s commitment to seek international "prosecution of the genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed during the aggression and occupation." This last point reflects current Azerbaijani policy, which was articulated in President Aliyev,s August address to Azerbaijan,s Ambassadors, ref c. We are concerned that this language could be counter both to US policy and the current spirit of confidence-building between Azerbaijan and Armenia.)

¶7. (C) In response to the Ambassador's question of whether the USG should identify a new USG rep to take up the US seat on the IAWG, Johnson said doing so at this stage, when the NSC is almost final, could be counterproductive. The USG has not been active on the IAWG and Azimov probably seeks to keep a low-profile on western advice on the document. Johnson said Azimov probably would not solicit US assistance, although Azimov also would be unlikely to refuse a US request to be involved in the process.

GOAJ Interagency Process a Positive Precedent

¶8. (C) Bristow and Johnson were eager to see what role Azimov's interagency working group and the IAWG might play in drafting the Military Doctrine and Foreign Policy Strategy. They noted that the interagency process behind the drafting of NSC was a positive step. They remarked that Azimov had "maneuvered the process quite well." Both were also concerned that absent a similar coordinating body for the Military Doctrine and the Foreign Policy Strategy, the drafting process would be fragmented and slow. Johnson said Azimov wants the interagency working group and the IAWG to participate in coordinating the drafting process for the follow-on documents, pointing to the authority granted to the IAWG in the Presidential decree creating it. Bristow observed, however, that Azimov probably will be sidelined in the drafting of the Military Doctrine. If this occurs, it will be more difficult to gain insight into the drafting process of these two documents, particularly if the IAWG does not play a role.

Perspectives on the Military Doctrine

¶9. (C) Turning to the Military Doctrine, Johnson said "it is not a good piece of paper," and "it will be a difficult process" to make it better. Johnson said that the military doctrine will be a critical tool in pushing for substantive defense reforms.

¶10. (C) As the US and European countries seek to assist Baku

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in drafting these documents, the Ambassadors agreed on the importance of deconflicting. For example, EU countries have expertise in working with the police and Ministry of Interior, while the US has unique expertise in engaging with the MOD. Bristow remarked that deconfliction was especially important in working with the Azerbaijani MOD, which is not eager to embrace reforms. Johnson said the US military could be effective in encouraging greater civilian control of the MOD. Johnson observed that the sheer weight of practical US DoD engagement with the MOD could be a key lever in pushing the MOD to undertake needed reforms, much as DoD engaged in Georgia, and that may be the best value the US can provide to the process at this time. Johnson advised that the best time for stepped-up US engagement with the MOD would be after the Military Doctrine has been drafted and when the MOD begins its Strategic Defense Review. He judged that the earliest time frame for the Military Doctrine to be finished is two years.

¶11. (C) The participants noted the need to package US assistance to the MOD carefully. Bristow suggested that US assistance would be best cast within the framework of Azerbaijan's IPAP. All agreed that increased English language classes for the MOD could make a great impact over time. Bristow said the UK has been funding English courses for the MOD, but the funding will stop in several years. Bristow suggested that perhaps the US could encourage additional courses and get the GOAJ to pay for the classes.

Comment and Action Request

¶12. (C) In order to advance our goal of securing progress in Azerbaijan,s IPAP implementation, the USG and other NATO allies need to be able to fully support and endorse the National Security Concept when it becomes public. In general, we view the NSC as a well-reasoned document that lays out solid, and internationally acceptable, national security goals. However, we note that the NSC language regarding alleged Armenian "genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity" potentially could limit our ability to strongly endorse this document. We request that the Department provide an expert-level review and guidance on the USG view of the draft NSC by December 5. If there are any problems regarding the draft NSC language--particularly regarding the NK conflict--we will need to raise them privately with the GOAJ as soon as possible, to ensure they are resolved before the document is presented to President Aliyev in mid-December.

DERSE